



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/765,494

01/27/2004

Paul Steven Dowdy

EN-WR-001

9521

25784

7590

11/18/2005

MICHAEL O. SCHEINBERG

P.O. BOX 164140

AUSTIN, TX 78716-4140

EXAMINER

MULLEN, THOMAS J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2632

DATE MAILED: 11/18/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/765,494

Applicant(s)

DOWDY, PAUL STEVEN

Examiner

Thomas J. Mullen, Jr.

Art Unit

2632

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 October 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 and 10-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 8, 12-20 and 24 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 10, 11, 21-23, 25 and 26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 06 October 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

Art Unit: 2632

1. The amendment filed 10/6/05 has been fully considered. The replacement drawing sheets are approved.

2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: paragraph 1026, line 3, it appears that after "test switch" should be inserted --S5-- (see paragraph 1 of the last Office action).

Appropriate correction is required.

3. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

4. Claims 1-7, 10-11, 21-23 and 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

At the end of claim 1 (amended) and claim 21 (new), "the predetermined first time period being sufficiently short to prevent a collision of the ship when the rudder is not being controlled" is indefinite as to (i) how a time period per se can "prevent a collision" of the ship, and (ii) whether "when the rudder is not being controlled" refers to a period of time after the "inactivity time period", or during the "inactivity time period" (i.e., starting with the last detected occurrence of rudder control adjustment). Perhaps the following suggested language better expresses the intended recitation:

--the predetermined first time period being sufficiently short such that an appropriate party is alerted to take action to prevent a collision of the ship once the rudder has not been adjusted for the predetermined first time period--.

In claim 5, line 2, the multiple references to "vehicle" are indefinite and/or lack antecedent basis, as claim 1 no longer uses the term "vehicle" per se.

Likewise, in claim 10, line 1, "the vehicle" lacks antecedent basis.

In claim 21, line 4, "the time period" lacks antecedent basis.

In claim 23, line 2, it appears that "of" should be deleted.

Art Unit: 2632

The dependency of claims 25-26 appears to be in error, note that claim 21 is a method claim while claim 25 refers to a "system" (claim 26 does refer to a "method"); and in each of claims 25-26, "the first timer" and "the signal" each lack antecedent basis with respect to claim 21 (also in claim 25, "the steering system" lacks antecedent basis with respect to claim 21).

5. Claims 1-7, 10-11, 21-23 and 25-26 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

Claims 8, 12-20 and 24 are allowed.

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas J. Mullen, Jr. whose telephone number is 571-272-2965. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 6:30 AM to 4 PM. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel Wu, can be reached on (571) 272-2964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 571-272-2600.

TJM

  
Thomas J. Mullen, Jr.  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2632